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Agenda item 30

Effects of atomic radiation

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-second session the item entitled "Effects of atomic radiation" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item and held a general debate on it at its 12th meeting, on 29 October 2007 (see A/C.4/62/SR.12).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.[1]

4. At the 12th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Australia, in her capacity as Chair of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, made a statement (see A/C.4/62/SR.12).

5. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation made a presentation.

6. Also, at its 12th meeting, the Committee held an interactive dialogue on the item in the form of a question and answer session, during which the Secretary of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation responded to questions from representatives of four Member States and the Chair of the Fourth Committee on various aspects of work of the Scientific Committee (see A/C.4/62/SR.12).

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/62/46).

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II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/62/L. 5

7. At the 12th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Australia, on behalf of Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Effects of atomic radiation" (A/C.4/62/L.5).

8. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee made a statement regarding the programme budget implications of the draft resolution (see A/C.4/62/SR.12).

9. Also at the 12th meeting, the representative of Belarus made a statement in explanation of position (see A/C.4/62/SR.12).

10. At its 12th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/62/L.5 without a vote (see para. 11).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

11. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Effects of atomic radiation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955, by which it established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and its subsequent resolutions on the subject, including resolution 61/109 of 14 December 2006, in which, inter alia, it requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work,

Taking note with appreciation of the work of the Scientific Committee, and of the release of its report on its fifty-fifth session,[1]

Reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work,

Concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the levels of radiation to which mankind and the environment are exposed,

Noting the views expressed by Member States at its sixty-second session with regard to the work of the Scientific Committee,

Noting also the deep concern of the Scientific Committee that reliance on a single post at the Professional level in its secretariat has left the Committee seriously vulnerable and has hampered the efficient implementation of its approved programme of work,

Conscious of the continuing need to examine and compile information about atomic and ionizing radiation and to analyse its effects on mankind and the environment,

1. *Commends* the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for the valuable contribution it has been making in the course of the past fifty-two years, since its inception, to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation, and for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement;

2. *Reaffirms* the decision to maintain the present functions and independent role of the Scientific Committee,

3. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to continue its work, including its important activities to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources;

4. *Endorses* the intentions and plans of the Scientific Committee for completing its present programme of work of scientific review and assessment on behalf of the General Assembly and for developing a longer-term strategic plan for

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/62/46).

its work, and requests the Committee to submit plans for its future programme of work to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

5. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to continue at its next session the review of the important problems in the field of ionizing radiation and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

6. *Recalls* the intention of the Scientific Committee, expressed in paragraph 5 of its report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session,[2] to clarify further the assessment of potential harm owing to chronic low-level exposures among large populations and also the attributability of health effects, and encourages the Committee to submit a report on that issue at its earliest convenience;

7. *Emphasizes* the need for the Scientific Committee to hold regular sessions on an annual basis so that its report can reflect the latest developments and findings in the field of ionizing radiation and thereby provide updated information for dissemination among all States, and endorses, on an exceptional basis, the intention of the Committee to convene its fifty-sixth session for seven days in order to finalize its next substantive report;

8. *Expresses its appreciation* for the assistance rendered to the Scientific Committee by Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and non-governmental organizations, and invites them to increase their cooperation in this field;

9. *Invites* the Scientific Committee to continue its consultations with scientists and experts from interested Member States in the process of preparing its future scientific reports, and requests the Secretariat to facilitate such consultations;

10. *Welcomes*, in this context, the readiness of Member States to provide the Scientific Committee with relevant information on the effects of ionizing radiation in affected areas, and invites the Committee to analyse and give due consideration to such information, particularly in the light of its own findings;

11. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned to provide further relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation, which would greatly help in the preparation of future reports of the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly;

12. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue providing support for the effective conduct of the work of the Scientific Committee and for the dissemination of its findings to the General Assembly, the scientific community and the public;

13. *Appeals* to the Secretary-General to take appropriate administrative measures so that the secretariat can adequately service the Scientific Committee in a predictable and sustainable manner and effectively facilitate the use of the invaluable expertise offered to the Committee by its members in order that the Committee may discharge the responsibilities and mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly;

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[2] Ibid., *Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 46* and corrigendum (A/61/46 and Corr.1).

14. *Urges* the United Nations Environment Programme to review and strengthen the present funding of the Scientific Committee, pursuant to paragraph 13 of resolution 61/109, and to continue to seek out and consider temporary funding mechanisms to complement existing ones, and, in that context, takes note of the establishment by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme of a general trust fund to receive and manage voluntary contributions to support the work of the Scientific Committee, and encourages Member States to consider making voluntary contributions to the trust fund;

15. *Welcomes* that Belarus, Finland, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Ukraine have informed the President of the General Assembly before 28 February 2007, in accordance with paragraph 14 of resolution 61/109, of their desire to become members of the Scientific Committee, and invites each of those six Member States to designate one scientist to attend, as observers, the fifty-sixth session of the Committee;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive and consolidated report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, to be prepared in consultation with the Scientific Committee as appropriate, addressing the financial and administrative implications of increased Committee membership, staffing of the professional secretariat and methods to ensure sufficient, assured and predictable funding.